

Watsonville Sloughs Watershed

Resource Conservation & Enhancement Plan

prepared for

County of Santa Cruz Planning Department
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PREFACE

The WSCEP is designed to provide a future vision and a guide for many agencies, organizations and individual landowners to further the goals of conserving and restoring the diverse natural resources of the Watsonville Sloughs Watershed in concert with improving the existing economic, social and recreational activities for the community. The Plan is designed to be adaptable and flexible should important factors change in the future. The Plan supports and respects the rights of property owners and projects will only occur with the support of willing landowners and other partners.

This document identifies feasible projects that address the long-term protection and enhancement of the Watsonville Sloughs system's ecological values and the needs of agriculture and other land uses. It represents the involvement and efforts of a diverse set of numerous stakeholders who took the time to share their knowledge. The strategies and project specifics were collected from public comments received during community meetings and focused workshops convened by a steering committee and consultant team, selected to reflect a balance of the different stakeholders in the watershed. A considerable number of individual meetings were held with growers and landowners in both the lower and upper watershed to discuss wetland and resource issues and possibilities for mutually beneficial projects. All of these efforts were instrumental in refining and prioritizing the recommended projects.

Initial projects have been identified to begin implementation and demonstrate successful ways to relieve environmental stressors, buffer wetlands and sensitive areas from land use impacts, and begin the restoration of a functional ecosystem within the Sloughs.

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